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1. Transmitted is a change to VA (Department of Veterans Affairs), VHA (Veterans Health Administration) Supplement to Manual, MP-5, Part II, Chapter 6, "Proficiency Rating System." Brackets have been used to identify changes in text.

2. Principal changes are as follows:

a. **Paragraph 6.06**

(1) A new subparagraph 6.06d, Chief of Staff Rating Process, has been added which defines the achievement levels by which the Chief of Staff's accomplishment of each established performance standard is assessed. Based on the achievement levels assigned, one of five summary rating levels, also defined in this subparagraph, is assigned.

(2) Paragraph 6.06e provides that advancement of a nurse to a higher level within the grade will establish a new date of grade for proficiency reporting purposes.

(3) A new subparagraph 6.06f, Annual Rating Dates for Chiefs of Staff, has been added to define the appraisal period for Chiefs of Staff as July 1 to June 30.

b. **Appendix 6A:** A new instruction sheet which provides guidance on the completion of a new VA Form 10-2623b, Chief of Staff Performance Appraisal System (to be issued concurrently with this change), has been added to Appendix 6A.

3. Previous policy found in VHA Directive 10-92-138, Chief of Staff Performance Standards, dated December 31, 1992, will be used in converting Chiefs of Staff from the Proficiency Rating System to the new Chief of Staff Performance Appraisal System contained in this supplement.

4. **Filing Instructions:**

Remove Pages

6-i through 6-5
6A-App.-3 through 6A-App-4

Insert Pages

6-i through 6-10
6A-3 through 6A-3b
6A-4
6A-19 through 6A-25

5. **RESCISSIONS:** Partial rescission: DM&S Supplement MP-5, Part II, Chapter 6, pages 6-i through 6-5, and 6A-App. 3 through 6A-App. 4, dated August 31, 1988.

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RESCISSIONS

The following material is rescinded:

1. COMPLETE RESCISSIONS

a. Manuals

DM&S Supplement, MP-5, Part II, Chapter 6, Chapter 16B

DM&S Supplement, MP-5, Part II, Chapter 6, dated June 1, 1964 (Transmittal Letter "E")

DM&S Supplement, MP-5, Part II, Chapter 6, dated April 22, 1966

DM&S Supplement, MP-5, Part II, Chapter 6, dated October 7, 1970, erratum, and changes 1 through 6

DM&S Supplement, MP-5, Part II, Chapter 6, dated October 28, 1980

b. Interim Issues

II 10-65-5

II 10-67-31

II 10-68-6

II 10-85-9

c. DM&S/VHA Circulars

10-63-285

10-63-247

10-64-206

2. PARTIAL RESCISSIONS

a. Manuals

DM&S Supplement, MP-5, Part II, Chapter 6, pgs 6-i through 6-5, and 6A-App.-3 through 6A-App.-4, dated August 31, 1988

b. Interim Issues

II 10-66-3 (insofar as this chapter is concerned)

CHAPTER 6. PROFICIENCY RATING SYSTEM

6.01 SCOPE

a. This chapter implements MP-5, Part II, Chapter 6, by establishing the procedures for the proficiency rating system for full-time, part-time, and intermittent physicians, dentists, podiatrists, optometrists, nurses, nurse anesthetists, physician assistants and expanded-function dental auxiliaries. [This chapter also implements a separate performance appraisal system for Chiefs of Staff. For purposes of this supplement, the term Chief of Staff also includes Regional Chiefs of Staff. (Unless otherwise indicated, the terms proficiency report, proficiency rating, etc., will cover the performance appraisal system for Chiefs of Staff.)] The preceding categories of individuals are included in the term employee(s) as used in this chapter unless otherwise specified.

b. Excluded from the provisions of this chapter are:

(1) **Distinguished Physicians.**

(2) **Health Care Facility Directors.** Health care facility Directors appointed under authority of 38 U.S.C. (United States Code) [7401(1)]. Directors will be evaluated using the same policies and practices that apply to the Senior Executive Service in accordance with provisions of MP-5, Part I, Chapter 920, Section F.

(3) [] **Residents.** Residents will be evaluated in accordance with the provisions of M-8, Part II.

(4) **Individuals Appointed [Under 38 U.S.C. 7401(3) or 38 U.S.C. 7405(a)(1)(B)].** This includes such employees as certified respiratory therapy technicians, registered respiratory therapists, licensed physical therapists and licensed practical or vocational nurses. These employees will be evaluated in accordance with the 5 U.S.C. provisions contained in MP-5, Part I, Chapter 430.

[(5) **The Under Secretary for Health.**]

6.02 REFERENCES

a. Title 38, U.S.C., Chapter[s] 73 [and 74].

b. MP-5, Part II, and its [VHA] Supplements, Chapters 4, 6, 8 and 9.

6.03 DEFINITIONS

a. **Rating Official.** An employee designated to prepare a proficiency rating on an employee under that person's supervision.

b. **Approving Official.** An employee designated to review and approve a proficiency rating.

c. **Proficiency Rating.** The overall adjective rating assigned to an employee based on a total evaluation of proficiency.

6.04 PURPOSES

a. The proficiency rating system is designed to ensure the effective and efficient utilization of covered employees and to ensure that dealings with the public are

consistent with VA's (Department of Veterans Affairs) mission to provide the best possible care to our country's veterans. Proficiency ratings and the processes of review, analysis and evaluation will be used:

(1) To provide a basis for keeping employees informed of what is expected of them, of the level of their performance in their assignments, and to serve as a guide in developing their skills and abilities.

(2) To assist in planning for the utilization of skills and assignment of personnel.

(3) To provide a basis for effecting advancements within the grade.

(4) To serve as one of the factors for determining eligibility for promotion to higher grade.

(5) To serve as a basis for action in cases where service is unsatisfactory.

(6) To provide a basis for improving the effectiveness of personnel by indicating needs for training and development.

(7) To provide a basis for strengthening employee-supervisor relationships.

(8) To provide evidence of outstanding service.

b. The processes of review, analysis, and evaluation embodied in the proficiency rating system, and the procedural steps and requirements of the system, will not prevent or otherwise limit the review of probationary employee performance, or impede the separation of such an employee under the provisions of Chapter 4 and under 38 U.S.C. [7403(b)].

Authority: 38 U.S.C. [7421; 7304].

6.05 AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

a. The facility Director is responsible for the proper functioning of the proficiency rating system and for seeing that each subordinate supervisor is trained in the proficiency rating system [and aware that any preestablished distribution of levels of ratings for employees covered under this section is prohibited. For VA Central Office employees, this function is the responsibility of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health; for Medical Region employees, this function is the responsibility of the Regional Director.] This includes supervisory responsibility for furthering equal employment opportunity and, in the case of second or higher line officials, training in how to evaluate supervisory performance in this area. This training will be provided as soon as possible after the individual assumes supervisory responsibilities.

b. Supervisors are responsible for evaluating the proficiency of employees they supervise, for counseling employees to improve the quality of service and to correct deficiencies, [for taking action if performance does not improve (see Chapters 4, 8, and 9 for further guidance),] for explaining the proficiency rating system to employees, and for understanding and applying appropriate principles and techniques to ensure equitable and useful ratings.

c. A rating official will carefully evaluate the performance of and prepare a proficiency rating for an employee and will be responsible for timely preparation of the Proficiency Report.

d. An approving official will be responsible for reviewing, commenting on, and approving a report.

e. A member of the Human Resources Management staff will be responsible for the administrative review of a report and for giving technical advice to rating and approval officials, including assuring timely completion of the report.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. [7421; 7304].

6.06 PROFICIENCY REPORT

a. **Rating Form.** VA Form 10-2623, Proficiency Report, for nurses[;] VA Form 10-2623a, Proficiency Report, for Physicians, Dentists, Podiatrists, Optometrists, Nurse Anesthetists, Physician Assistants and Expanded-function Dental Auxiliaries; [and VA Form 10-2623b, Chief of Staff Performance Appraisal System,] will be the only rating forms used for these employees. A copy of the approved Proficiency Report [or Chief of Staff Performance Appraisal System form, as applicable,] will be provided for each employee as indicated in Appendix 6A. The last report on record will be considered the current report. (This may be either the last annual report or a subsequent official special report, if prepared in full.)

b. **Discussion and Employee Comments.** After approval of the rating, the rating official will discuss the contents and conclusions of the report with the employee rated. The employee may further discuss the rating with the approving official. If, after discussions with the rating official and the approving official, the employee disagrees with a proficiency rating, the employee may submit concise comments concerning the Proficiency Report through the rating and approving officials for filing in the Official Personnel Folder and/or Board Action Folder.

c. **Proficiency Ratings.** [(See par. d for ratings for Chiefs of Staff)]

(1) The employee will be rated on elements which provide for consideration of proficiency and performance in terms of pertinent personal, professional, administrative and supervisory attributes, characteristics, []skills[, and service to the public] as applied to the duties and responsibilities of the assignment. The employee will be informed in advance which elements will be considered in the rating process.

(2) Proficiency ratings will be assigned to an employee based on an objective appraisal of overall competency in the performance of duties and responsibilities. Normally, the overall evaluation should reflect an average of the rated categories and the narrative summary. In some instances, one or more rated categories which are critical to successful performance may form the basis for the overall ratings because their significance outweighs that of other categories rated, or the aggregate of other categories. For example, when an unacceptable level of performance has been demonstrated in one or more rated categories in which satisfactory performance is essential, an overall rating of unsatisfactory may be assigned.

(3) For a nurse, proficiency ratings will be used to summarize how the employee meets the criteria in the Nurse Qualification Standard and the appropriate functional statement.

(4) The five adjective ratings defined below will be used:

(a) **Unsatisfactory.** The employee has not met reasonable expectations of performance.

(b) **Low Satisfactory.** The employee usually met reasonable expectations but performance was sometimes marginal.

(c) **Satisfactory.** The employee fully met and sometimes exceeded expectations.

(d) **High Satisfactory.** The employee usually exceeded reasonable expectations by a substantial margin.

(e) **Outstanding.** The employee consistently exceeded reasonable expectations to an exceptional degree.

d. **[Chief of Staff Rating Process]**

(1) The rater will assess the Chief of Staff's accomplishment of each established performance standard, consider the impact of the individual standards on overall performance of the element and assign one achievement level for each element. An achievement level must be assigned for each critical and noncritical element of the performance plan unless the Chief of Staff has had insufficient opportunity to demonstrate performance in the element. **NOTE:** *A critical element is any element which contributes toward accomplishing organizational goals and objectives, and which is of such importance that unacceptable performance of it would result in unacceptable performance in the position. A noncritical element is any element which does not meet the definition of a critical element but is still of sufficient importance to warrant written appraisal.* If an achievement level other than fully successful is assigned, actual accomplishments supporting that level must be documented in the portion of VA Form 10-2623b provided for this purpose. When an achievement level of fully successful is assigned, documentation of performance accomplishments is not required.

(2) Achievement levels are defined as follows:

(a) **Less Than Fully Successful.** A level of performance that does not meet the standards established for the fully successful level. Assignment of this achievement level means that performance of the element is unacceptable.

(b) **Fully Successful.** Performance standards for the particular element when taken as a whole are being met. This level is a positive indication of employee performance and means that the employee is effectively meeting performance demands for this component of the job.

(c) **Exceptional.** Fully successful performance standards for the element are being significantly surpassed. This level is reserved for employees whose performance in the element far exceeds normal expectations and results in major contributions to the organization.

(3) Based on the achievement levels assigned, the rater will assign one of the five summary rating levels defined as follows:

(a) **Unsatisfactory.** The achievement level(s) for one (or more) critical element(s) is (are) designated as less than fully successful.

(b) **Minimally Satisfactory.** Achievement levels for all critical elements are designated as at least fully successful. However, the achievement level(s) for one (or more) noncritical element(s) is (are) designated as less than fully successful.

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(c) **Fully Successful.** The achievement level(s) for one (or more) critical element(s) is (are) designated as fully successful. Achievement levels for other critical and noncritical elements are designated as at least fully successful or higher.

(d) **Excellent.** Achievement levels for all critical elements are designated as exceptional. Achievement levels for noncritical elements are designated as at least fully successful. Some, but not all, noncritical elements may be designated as exceptional.

(e) **Outstanding.** Achievement levels for all elements are designated as exceptional. (An outstanding rating reflects an extraordinary level of individual achievement and major contribution to accomplishment of organizational goals and objectives.)

e. **Annual Rating Dates for Chiefs of Staff**

Appraisal periods for Chiefs of Staff will be from July 1 through June 30. Ratings will be prepared by the rating official at the end of the appraisal period and will be documented on VA Form 10-2623b. Completed ratings will be forwarded through channels by August 15, to the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health (10A2) for approval.

f. **Annual Rating Dates.** []

(1) Due dates will be the anniversary date of grade, except that advancement of a nurse to a higher level within the grade will also establish a new date of grade.

(2) Due dates will not be affected by delayed annual ratings or special reports.

(3) The Chief, Human Resources Management Service, will send the Proficiency Report form to rating officials at least 110 days prior to the due date. Employees will normally receive their first and subsequent ratings at any time within the 90 days prior to the due date.

g. **Delayed Annual Rating.** Regular proficiency ratings will be made annually as indicated unless delayed under the following provisions:

(1) A regular rating may be delayed where there has been failure to meet counseling requirements or other procedural requirements of the proficiency rating system (see par. 6.07f); or when an employee is absent from duty for an extended period; or pending the results of VA Central Office and facility investigations or other actions affecting the employment status of an

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employee. A delayed rating will not extend the employee's probationary period or expiration of temporary appointment.

(2) A regular rating may be delayed in 90 day increments beyond the due date with the approval of the health care facility Director for facility employees; by the Regional Director for Medical Region employees; or, by the Deputy Under Secretary for Health, or designee, for Chiefs of Staff and VA Central Office employees.

(3) The employee will be notified in writing by the rating official of the reasons for delaying the rating. The Chief, Human Resources Management Service, will review the notice prior to issuance to ensure that provisions of this paragraph have been met.

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(4) The date of the subsequent regular proficiency rating will not be affected by a delayed rating, and the next rating period will be shortened accordingly.

h. **Special Report.** Any Proficiency Report other than the regular annual report is considered a special report. A special report will be prepared as follows:

(1) As soon as possible before a Professional Standards Board review or a Disciplinary Board hearing under the provisions of MP-5, Part II, Chapter 4, if more than 3 months have elapsed since the last annual report. The absence of a special Proficiency Report will not prevent the initiation or completion of Board proceedings.

(2) When the rating official is assigned to another position or transfers to another VA facility or separates from VA employment, when the assignment of the employee being rated changes, or when an employee in a probationary period transfers to another VA facility, and when more than 90 days have elapsed since the last Proficiency Report was completed; or when an employee has been detailed for 3 months or longer. These reports will be designated as "interim" ratings. After being incorporated in the regular annual rating, the "interim" rating will be destroyed. Since employees will normally receive their first and subsequent ratings at any time within the 90 days prior to the due date, if more than 9 months have elapsed since the last Proficiency Report, the regular annual report will be completed when the event occurs. (This will not affect the due date of subsequent annual proficiency ratings.)

(3) On an employee's separation, if more than 90 days have elapsed since the employee's appointment or last annual rating. The approving official, after consulting with the rating official, will record the reason(s) for the separation, the employee's stated reason(s) if substantially different from the approving official's opinion, the effective date of separation, and a statement as to whether reemployment would be recommended. Human Resources Management staff will forward copies of the Proficiency Report and of the SF (Standard Form) 50B, Notification of Personnel Action, effecting the separation to the employee and will file copies in the Official Personnel Folder. It is preferable that the final Proficiency Report be completed and the employee given a copy prior to separation. Otherwise, a copy will be forwarded to the employee.

(4) Anytime the employee's services are deficient in any important assigned duties, regardless of the due date of the annual report. If the employee demonstrates inadequate proficiency or weak performance in one or more categories at anytime during the year, the employee will normally be counseled and given the opportunity to improve prior to the issuance of a Proficiency

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Report. (See par. 6.07 for counseling requirements.) If an unsatisfactory rating is assigned, action must be taken as indicated in paragraph 6.08.

NOTE: *An unsatisfactory proficiency rating is not required to separate a probationary employee or to terminate a full-time, part-time, or intermittent employee appointed under 38 U.S.C 7405. Similarly, an unsatisfactory proficiency rating is not required in order to proceed with disciplinary action on a permanent employee under MP-5, Part II, Chapter 8, when the proficiency rating is not a basis for the proposed action. (For example, if the disciplinary action is based on the employee's failure to observe VA policy on outside professional activities outlined in MP-5, Part II, Chapter 13, an unsatisfactory proficiency rating is not required.)*

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7421; 7304

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6.07 COUNSELING PROGRAM

a. **Purpose.** Supervisors will counsel their employees at least annually. Counseling provides a positive means of accomplishing the purposes of the proficiency, probationary, advancement, and disciplinary systems, and is particularly pertinent for employees whose services have been deficient in any important assigned duties. This medium provides employees with the benefit of their supervisors' analyses of the performance of their duties, assists in improving the quality of service rendered and may enhance their professional and administrative capabilities. Counseling is not a condition which must be met in order to initiate or complete Professional Standards Board proceedings.

b. Responsibility

(1) Supervisors will thoroughly review the performance of their employees. Special care will be exercised for those in their probationary periods, particularly when they are about to complete them. Chiefs of Staff will ensure that supervisory personnel conduct counseling conferences as needed.

(2) Facility Directors will conduct counseling conferences for Chiefs of Staff.

(3) Chiefs of Staff will conduct counseling conferences for chiefs of services and others under their immediate supervision.

(4) Regional Directors will conduct counseling conferences for heads of outpatient clinics located in [Veterans Benefits Administration]regional offices.

(5) For VA Central Office employees, counseling will be conducted by appropriate supervisory officials.

c. Nature of the Conference

(1) The counseling conference will be informal and confidential. The employee will be informed, orally or in writing, of the manner in which assignments are being performed. Duties and responsibilities which are essential to successful performance will be highlighted by the supervisor.

(2) Supervisors will commend strong performance, discuss objectively any weaknesses, and furnish suggestions and advice for improvement.

(3) Supervisors will indicate in subsequent annual or special reports when the employee's performance improves in areas previously cited as weaknesses.

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(4) A counseling conference will be conducted prior to the date the annual report is issued if the supervisor contemplates giving the employee a low[/minimally] satisfactory or unsatisfactory overall rating, unless the rating is for a permanent employee appointed under 38 U.S.C. [7401(1)] whose performance constitutes a clear danger to the employee or others; or, for all other employees, it is clear that improvement is unlikely or the employee's performance constitutes a clear danger to the employee or others. (See subpar. e.)

d. **Satisfactory or Better Performance.** The rating official will discuss with the employee their satisfactory rating as soon as possible after the approving official has returned the approved report.

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NOTE: *The employee will complete section F of VA Form 10-2623 or VA Form 10-2623a [or section G of VA Form 10-2623b, as applicable] to indicate that the contents of the Proficiency Report have been discussed. If the employee refuses, the rating official will make a notation to this effect and sign and date it. The employee will be given a copy of the Proficiency Report form containing the approved proficiency rating.*

e. Low [/Minimally] Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory Performance

(1) At any time during the appraisal period when performance problems are observed which may be expected to result in a low[/minimally] satisfactory or unsatisfactory annual proficiency rating, the rating official will hold a counseling conference with the employee sufficiently in advance of the due date of the annual report to inform the employee of the deficiencies, give the employee a reasonable opportunity to correct identified deficiencies and demonstrate satisfactory performance, as follows:

(a) For a permanent employee appointed under 38 U.S.C. [7401(1)] for whom a low[/minimally] satisfactory or unsatisfactory annual or special proficiency rating is to serve as a basis for [] action under MP-5, Part II, Chapter 8 and its [VHA] Supplement, the documented counseling requirements in subparagraphs (2) through (4) must be met unless the employee's performance constitutes a clear danger to [the employee] or others. In cases where gross negligence or misconduct, rather than the proficiency rating, is to be the basis for a proposed [] action, counseling is not a procedural requirement. (See MP-5, Pt. II, Ch. 8.)

(b) For all other employees, the documented counseling requirements in subparagraphs (2) through (4) are recommended. A low[/minimally] satisfactory or unsatisfactory rating may be issued without this counseling, however, if it is clear that improvement is unlikely, [if the employee's performance history demonstrates a pattern of improvement during a performance improvement period followed by a drop in performance after completion of the improvement period,] or if the employee's performance constitutes a clear danger to [the employee] or others.

(2) During the conference, the rating official will tell the employee of the time, normally 60 to 90 days, which will be allowed for improvement of performance.

(3) After the conference, the rating official will prepare, sign, and date a document indicating the reasons for the conference, the performance deficiencies and suggested solutions, and the time allowed for improvement. A copy will be given to the employee, and the employee will initial the original to indicate a copy has been received. If the employee refuses to initial, the

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supervisor will note this fact. The document will be retained by the supervisor until the proficiency rating is assigned.

(4) If the employee's performance does not improve sufficiently at the end of the specified time period, a low[/minimally] satisfactory or unsatisfactory proficiency rating will be assigned. The document prepared in accordance with subparagraph (3) will be attached. If the employee's performance does improve sufficiently to warrant a fully satisfactory or better proficiency rating, the document prepared in accordance with subparagraph (3) will be destroyed.

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(5) Action will be taken as indicated in paragraph 6.08 if an unsatisfactory proficiency rating is assigned to an employee.

f. Delayed Annual Rating

(1) If a low[/minimally] satisfactory or unsatisfactory rating is contemplated and the counseling requirements have not been met, the rating official will request a delay of the annual rating. (See par. 6.06g.)

(2) While the Proficiency Report is delayed, the employee will be counseled as outlined in subparagraph e. The approving official will assign a rating at the end of the counseling period. If approved as an unsatisfactory proficiency rating, action will be taken as indicated in paragraph 6.08.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. [7421; 7304].

6.08 PROCESSING UNSATISFACTORY PROFICIENCY REPORTS

a. When an unsatisfactory rating has been approved for a probationary employee, the employee's probationary period will be reviewed in accordance with the procedures in Chapter 4, this supplement. [This review will include the employee's services and, if applicable, clinical privileges.]

b. When an unsatisfactory rating has been approved for a temporary full-time, part-time, or intermittent employee, or an employee appointed under 38 U.S.C. [7306,] supervisory officials will review the employee's service [and, if applicable, clinical privileges,] and determine whether termination is appropriate (see MP-5, pt. II, ch. 9).

b. When an unsatisfactory rating has been approved for a permanent employee, supervisory officials will review the employee's services and clinical privileges, and then determine which of the following actions may be appropriate.

(1) The employee should be detailed for a period not to exceed 6 months under the guidance of a highly qualified preceptor.

(2) The employee should be sent for additional training.

(3) The employee should be reassigned or have a change in duty assignment.

(4) The employee's fitness for continued [VHA] employment should be considered by a Physical Standards Board.

(5) The employee's clinical privileges should be modified.

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(6) Procedures in Chapter 8 of this supplement should be initiated.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. [7421; 7304].

6.09 ADVICE FROM EXPERT SOURCES

Although it is [ultimately] the responsibility of management officials to evaluate performance and take appropriate action, under certain limited circumstances these officials may need other professional advice and assistance in analyzing the nature of observed performance deficiencies. The proficiency approving official, after obtaining

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any needed authorizations, may request assistance from such professional sources as the Deans Committee, a consultant, or a peer group with expertise in the areas of the performance in question. The person or persons so designated will review the specified deficiency and report findings and recommendations to the approving official.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. [7421; 7304].

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C. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR RATING AND PROCESSING VA FORM 10-2623a FOR
PHYSICIANS, DENTISTS, PODIATRISTS, OPTOMETRISTS, NURSE ANESTHETISTS,
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS AND EXPANDED-FUNCTION DENTAL AUXILIARIES -- ACTION BY
RATING AND APPROVING OFFICIALS

1. Review the five categories and elements carefully to determine which categories cover the assignment of the employee to be rated. All employees will be evaluated for Personal Qualities (category V) in addition to the other pertinent categories.

2. A guide defining the five categories and providing an explanation of the elements for the categories is included in figure 6.04.

3. An adjective rating will be assigned for each appropriate category in section B. Elements in each category should be evaluated both separately and on an overall basis, taking into consideration strong and weak points of performance and consistent with the employee's clinical privileges.

4. Overall evaluation, section C, should reflect the total work performance. An overall unsatisfactory rating will result when the employee's performance has not met reasonable expectations, or the overall appraisal indicates weaknesses which would impair quality patient care, or there is inadequate proficiency or weak performance in one or more elements critical to adequate performance of the assignment. (See par. 6.06, 6.07, and 6.08) A low satisfactory rating will result when employee's performance usually met reasonable expectations, but performance was sometimes marginal.

5. The "Instruction Sheet" for the Proficiency Rating Form (included as part 6 of the interleaved fanfold of VA Form 10-2623a) contains specific instructions concerning the completion of the rating process, narrative summary, and overall evaluation. Special instructions concerning the rating process are included to assist in determining the overall adjective rating. The Proficiency Report Form and Instruction Sheet are shown in figures 6.03a, 6.03b, and 6.03c.

[D. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR RATING AND PROCESSING VA FORM 10-2623b FOR CHIEFS
OF STAFF - ACTIONS BY RATING AND APPROVING OFFICIALS.

Section A. Performance Plan

1. The performance standards for Chiefs of Staff have been organized into the following A, B, and C categories (critical elements have been identified with an asterisk):

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a. Category A standards apply to all Chiefs of Staff. Two critical elements are identified: "Leadership and Organizational Representation" and "Quality Management."

b. Category B standards apply to the extent that they are appropriate as determined by the programs at the facility.

c. Category C standards are to be developed locally at the beginning of each rating period and are to reflect important objectives to be addressed to meet facility, program, or individual needs or problems during the rating period.

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2. On or before May 1 of each year, the facility Director and Chief of Staff are to review these standards together, discuss them fully, identify the applicable Category B standards and develop Category C standards by which the Chief of Staff will be rated. The facility Director will discuss with the Chief of Staff the relative weight of the standards as they apply to that facility. These discussions will be documented in writing to ensure that, at time of appraisal, there is no misunderstanding that one standard had greater weight than another.

Section B. Progress Review

At least one progress review (on or before January 31st) is required during the appraisal year. The Chief of Staff must be informed of the level of performance as measured against the performance plan. Other progress reviews may be done as applicable.

Sections C-1. Actual Achievement and C-2. Specific Achievement

An adjective achievement level will be assigned for each critical and noncritical element of the Performance Plan for Categories A and C and applicable elements for Category B. Elements in each category should be evaluated separately, taking into consideration strong and weak points of performance and consistent with the employee's clinical privileges, if applicable. A guide defining the three achievement levels is contained in paragraph 6.06d(2). If an achievement level other than fully successful is assigned, actual accomplishments supporting that level must be documented in Section C-2. Specific Achievement. When an achievement level of fully successful is assigned, documentation of performance accomplishments is not required.

Section D. Summary Rating Level

Based on the achievement levels assigned in Section C-1, the rater will assign one of the five summary rating levels described in paragraph 6.06d(3). The overall evaluation should reflect the total work performance. Generally, an overall unsatisfactory rating will result when the Chief of Staff's performance has not met reasonable expectations, or the overall appraisal indicates weaknesses which would impair quality patient care, or there is inadequate proficiency or weak performance in one or more elements critical to adequate performance of the assignment. A minimally satisfactory rating will result when the Chief of Staff's performance usually met reasonable expectations but performance was sometimes marginal.

Section E. Narrative Summary

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This section may be used to describe significant accomplishments not otherwise described any other place on the appraisal form. Remarks in this section may not be used to change the summary rating appropriately derived from assigned levels of achievement ratings.

Section F. Rating

The rating official objectively appraises overall competency based on the summary rating level assigned in section D and the narrative summary in section E. Following signature by the rater, the rater will provide a copy of the appraisal to the Chief of Staff along with notification of the right to provide a written response.

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Section G. Chief of Staff Review

The Chief of Staff must be given adequate time to review the appraisal and rating and provide written comments on it before it is forwarded for higher level review and final approval. Three workdays is considered an adequate period of time. Any written response will be attached to the appraisal form.

Section H. Higher Level Review

The Chief of Staff's appraisal will be given a higher level review before being forwarded for final approval of the rating. The basis of any changes to the rating must be documented in the area of this section provided for that purpose.

Section I. Final Rating

The approving official will review the appraisal and rating and any comments, if applicable, made by the Chief of Staff and/or the higher level reviewer. The approving official will either approve the rating of the rater and/or higher level reviewer, or will change the rating according to the information available. The final rating of the approval official will be considered to be the rating of record and is not subject to higher level review. Should the Chief of Staff still not agree with the rating, the Chief of Staff may provide concise written comments concerning the rating as outlined in paragraph 6.06b.

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**E. SEQUENCE OF THE PROFICIENCY RATING PROCESS FOR POSITIONS WHICH GO ABOVE
FACILITY LEVEL FOR RATING AND/OR APPROVAL**

Employees will be rated by their immediate and higher level supervisors with the exceptions as follows:

1. If one of these supervisory assignments is vacant, the next higher level supervisor will serve as the approving official. If both these supervisory assignments are vacant, the next two higher level supervisors will serve as the rating and approving officials.

2. If the facility Director serves as the rating official, the Regional Director or higher level line official, after considering the comments of appropriate program officials, will serve as the approving official. Ratings forwarded for VA Central Office approval should be sent to the appropriate Regional Director (13___/054D).

3. Facility Directors will rate Chiefs of Staff and will approve ratings of service chiefs. They will also approve ratings of staff physicians and others when irregular situations place them in the normal line of supervision. Ratings of employees which go above the facility level for rating or approval will be routed through the facility Director for initials on the Proficiency Report Form to indicate review or for comments, as appropriate. [The Chief of Staff - Performance Appraisal System; the Proficiency Report for the Chief Medical Officer, Domiciliary; and Regional Office Clinic Directors will be forwarded for review and comments by the appropriate Regional Director, and through the Professional Affairs Staff (13___/10A2)], for approval by the Deputy Under Secretary for Health.

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Department of Veterans Affairs
II
Veterans Health Administration
Washington, DC 20420

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1. Transmitted is a change to VA (Department of Veterans Affairs), VHA (Veterans Health Administration) Supplement to Manual, MP-5, Part II, Chapter 6, "Proficiency Rating System." Brackets have been used to identify changes in text.

2. Principal changes are as follows:

a. **Paragraph 6.06f:** The reference is deleted.

b. **Appendix 6A:** In paragraph E, the proficiency report for a Chief of Staff, is to be forwarded to Professional Affairs Staff (10A2), prior to approval by the Deputy Under Secretary for Health.

3. Filing Instructions

Remove Pages

6-5 through 6-6
6A-3b through 6A-4

Insert Pages

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6A-3b through 6A-4

4. **RESCISSIONS:** Partial rescission: VHA Supplement MP-5, Part II, Chapter 6, pages 6-5 through 6-6, and 6A-3b through 6A-4, dated June 30, 1993.

John T. Farrar, M.D.
Acting Under Secretary for Health

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FD EX: EO

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